

Conservation Connections

Missouri Department of Conservation
St. Louis Regional Newsletter

July 2010



Restoring Grassland Wildlife Habitat

By Eric Merritt, MDC Wildlife Biologist

The William G. White and Erma Parke White Memorial Wildlife Area (White) is located in northern Lincoln County and is 810 acres in size. White was donated to the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) in 1976. Since this donation, the MDC has managed the area to provide the citizens of Missouri with a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities. The majority of public use on the area has been hunting or fishing related, and area management has reflected this trend. Early MDC managers recognized White as a great opportunity to manage for bobwhite quail and other grassland wildlife due to its mixture of grasslands, croplands, and open woodlands. They took action by planting shrubs for escape cover, grass and legumes for nesting cover, and food plots for a winter food source. They implemented prescribed burning on grassland areas and idle fields to promote new growth. They also took an inactive management approach by allowing vegetation to "grow up" naturally through succession. These management decisions created ideal habitat conditions for quail and other grassland wildlife. Unfortunately, the boom was relatively short lived. By the mid-90's succession had taken place for two decades, and habitat deteriorated. Survey trends indicate that the quail population peaked on White in the mid -1980's and started a steady decline throughout the 1990's and leveled off to a low, but steady population throughout the early 2000's.

The declining quail and grassland bird population trend is not unique to White. Declining grassland bird populations are occurring statewide as well as nationwide. It has been stated that grassland wildlife has declined more in the past 30 years than at any other time. These trends concerned MDC managers and the citizens of Missouri, so action was taken. In 2004, the MDC developed regional quail plans which included the designation of 19 conservation and wildlife areas as Quail Emphasis Areas (QEA's). White was one of the areas designated as a QEA. Selection was based

on the inherent habitat qualities of the conservation or wildlife area, public demand, size of the managed area, and proximity to urban areas. The primary goal of QEA's is to develop habitat that will support quail and grassland wildlife.

Since White's designation as a QEA, intense management has resumed. Fields, fence lines, and woodland edges that grew up into tall trees over the past 30 years have been reclaimed with the aid of a skid steer and chainsaw. Exotic grasses such as fescue and brome have been killed and replaced with native grasses and forbs. Fields that were once farmed have been left idle to allow native vegetation to grow. Prescribed fire frequency has been increased to create more disturbance on fields and woodlands. Exotic shrubs have been removed and replaced with native shrub species. Timber stand improvement, or tree thinning, has taken place on over half of the woodland acres on White. This allows more sunlight to hit the woodland floor, increasing native grass and wildflower response. Even cattle have been used to positively affect grassland acres through managed grazing. Low intensity grazing actually thins out robust grass and creates ideal conditions for quail nesting and brooding.

Intense grassland habitat management has again taken center stage at White. Results take time, but indications show that we are on the right track. The familiar whistle of male bobwhite quail is a common springtime sound throughout the area. The rabbit population has increased over the past three years, as many hunters will attest. Also, Eastern meadowlarks, an indicator species of grassland habitat, have returned. White is located about 30 miles north of Wentzville just off of Highway 61 near the village of Whiteside. Make the trip and hear a bobwhite whistle or an Eastern meadowlark call and know that management efforts will continue to make these sounds common on the White Wildlife Area.

Sign up to receive a direct link on-line to **Conservation Connections** by visiting www.mdc.mo.gov/areas/stlouis/ and entering your e-mail address.

Columbia Bottom Conservation Area

July 2010

801 Strodtman Road, St. Louis, MO 63138 Office hours are Wednesday - Friday from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Saturday - Sunday from 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

For reservations call (314) 877- 6014 Wednesday through Friday 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on our waiting list. Interpretive services are available for those with hearing loss with 5 days notice. From I-270 north take the Riverview Drive exit (last Missouri exit); go north approximately 2.8 miles. Riverview Drive becomes Columbia Bottom Road at its intersection with Larimore Road. The entrance is on the right-hand side. Visit www.mdc.mo.gov/areas/areas/bottom/

10 Basic Map Reading

Saturday 8 a.m. - 10 a.m.

(Ages 8 & up) Say no to Map Quest, and see you later Google. This day is reserved for the good 'ole topographic map. In today's world of high tech navigation tools, basic skills of old tend to get lost in the shuffle. Join us to brush up on your map reading skills. Whether you're a beginner or simply need a refresher course, keeping this skill alive could return the favor one day. (Reservations begin June 25.)



13 Bike the Bottom

Tuesday 6:15 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

(Ages 7 & up) Discover the diverse ecosystems of Columbia Bottom using pedal power as your mode of transportation. Bring your helmet as we pedal along the 7 mile round trip loop, enjoying the beautiful summer night. Meet at the boat ramp. We will bike to the Confluence. Come prepared for fun. (Reservations begin June 30.)

Columbia Bottom Volunteer Milestone

We've reached a first for Columbia Bottom milestones. Conservation Naturalist **Pat Behle** has given 2,000 hours of volunteer service!

Everyone, including volunteers and staff, is grateful to have Pat here. Her desire for life-long learning is what makes her programs and hikes so educational. Pat's willingness to do what needs to be done makes her programs work. And, her smile is what makes them fun. From the Bottom... of our hearts we just want to say, thank you Pat.

Forest Park Office

5595 Grand Drive, St. Louis, MO 63112 Office hours are Monday - Friday from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m

For reservations call (314) 877-1309 Monday through Friday 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on our waiting list. Interpretive services are available for those with hearing loss with 5 days notice. From I-44 take Kingshighway north to West Pine Boulevard, turn left. Follow West Pine to Lindell, turn left onto Lindell. Continue on Lindell past Union Drive to Cricket, turn left. Take first available right onto Grand Drive. The Visitors Center is the tan brick, red tile-roofed building with arched windows, and a clock tower. It will be on the right side of the street. Free parking is available in the double lot to the left or on the street.



20 Petal Power

Tuesday 10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

(Ages 5 - 12) Summer wildflowers are in bloom! Some showy, some not, some learned, some taught. Let's see just how many different flower petals we can spot while hiking through Steinberg Prairie. Meet at Round Lake at the northeast corner of the park. (Reservations begin July 1.)

August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area

2360 Hwy D, St. Charles, MO 63304 Office hours are Monday - Friday from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

For reservations call (636) 441-4554 Monday through Friday 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on our waiting list. Interpretive services are available for those with hearing loss with 5 days notice. From I-40 take Hwy 94 south to Hwy D; turn west on Hwy D for approximately 2 miles. The area entrance is on the north side of Hwy D. Visit www.mdc.mo.gov/areas/cnc/busch/

7 Discover Nature –

Families: Insectigations

Wednesday 9 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

(Families of All Ages) Become an insect investigator! Search and find crawly critters, then draw and label your findings. Sharpen your identification skills of the miniature world of insects. (Reservations begin June 23.)



7 Discover Nature – Families: Terrific Terrariums

Wednesday 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

(Families of All Ages) Come with a clear, 2 liter soda bottle and leave with a miniature living habitat! One habitat per family. (Reservations begin June 23.)

8 Draw and Paint Missouri Mammals

Thursday 10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

(Ages 10 & up) Missouri mammals are beautiful and elusive creatures. Join us to learn about Missouri foxes and beavers and get a close-up look at mounts to create drawings and paintings. (Reservations begin June 24.)

10 Wildflower Walk at Weldon Interpretive Center



Saturday 9 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

(Families of All Ages) Take a walk through the beautiful wildflower beds at the Weldon Spring Interpretive Site to see what's blooming. (Reservations begin June 25.)

Volunteer Milestones

Ed Horack 200 Hours
Angie Jungbluth 1000 Hours
Kathy Thiele 2500 Hours

17 Herons and Egrets of MTC

Saturday 7:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

(Adults) Join us for a 2½ mile hike to view the herons and egrets feeding in the Marais Temps Clair (MTC) marsh. The young have just left the nests so we hope to see both young and adults feeding together. See some of the showiest members of all wading birds. Learn to identify these birds from a distance through spotting scopes provided by your naturalists. (Reservations begin July 2.)



24 Missouri's Reptiles

Saturday 9 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

(Ages 7 & up) How many of Missouri's reptiles have you seen in the wild? Where did you see them? Did you happen to see one eating? Come meet some of Missouri's reptiles up close and see them in action as you observe them feeding. (Reservations begin July 9.)

27 Discover Nature – Families: What is a Wetland?

Tuesday 9 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

(Families of All Ages) Join us for a closer look at wetlands. We will look at what lives in a wetland, what wetlands are, and why we need them. You will even visit a real wetland to see this amazing habitat up close! (Reservations begin July 13.)



31 Discover Nature – Families: Birding for Beginners

Saturday 9 a.m. - 10 a.m.

(Families of All Ages) Birding is a lifelong hobby. Getting your child interested at a young age will pique curiosity. Working together, parent and child will learn the basics of bird identification. (Reservations begin July 16.)

Rockwoods Reservation

July 2010

2751 Glencoe Road, Wildwood, MO 63038 Office hours are Monday – Friday from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

For reservations call (636) 458-2236 Monday through Friday 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on our waiting list. Interpretive services are available for those with hearing loss with 5 days notice. From I-44 take Hwy 109 north 4 miles to Woods Avenue; left on Woods Avenue, then immediately right on Glencoe Road. From Manchester Road take Hwy 109 south 2 miles to Woods Avenue; right on Woods Avenue, then immediately right on Glencoe Road. Visit www.mdc.mo.gov/areas/stlouis/

ATTENTION: Rockwoods Caves are Closed

Unfortunately, due to the quick spread and devastating nature of “White-Nose Syndrome” (WNS), all Rockwoods caves (including Bathtub Cave) will be closed until further notice. At this time, WNS has not been found in Rockwoods. However, swift action is necessary to avoid further spread of this fungus that has already killed over 11 million bats in the U.S. and Canada. This closing is part of a larger statewide closing of caves.

Please visit www.mdc.mo.gov for more information about WNS.

7 Find the Naturalists: Hiking Trail Among the Trees

Wednesday 9:30 a.m. - Noon

(All Ages) Are you up for a challenge? Our naturalists have gone off wandering on our trail and we need your help to find them. We want you to hike with your family on the “Trail Among the Trees” to try to find them. When you do, you’ll learn interesting things about animals that live around the trail and other amazing nature facts you might not know. (No reservations required.)

8 Cooking on a Stick

Thursday 10:30 a.m. - Noon

(Ages 7 & up) Learn different methods for cooking your food over a campfire. We’ll teach you how to use a Dutch oven, backpack stove, and a stick of course! After learning these skills, you’ll be ready to make your meals after a morning of hunting or backpacking. All food will be provided. (Reservations begin June 24.)



10 Service Project: Save the Wildflowers

Saturday 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

(Ages 10 & up) Play your part in protecting Missouri’s natural resources by helping to clear invasive bush honeysuckle to free up native wildflowers. We will be working along the Trail Among the Trees across from the visitor center. Please bring work gloves, eye protection, water, and snacks. Please also bring hand tools like pruners and loppers if you have them. (Reservations begin June 25.)



14 Stream Study

Wednesday 10 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.

(Ages 7 & up) Are you looking for a unique way to beat the summer heat? Help us search for animal life in a stream and learn how these animals can predict the streams’ health. (Reservations begin June 30.)

14 Fire, Water, Shelter

Wednesday 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.

(Ages 7 & up) Test your survival skills as you learn to make use of tools found in nature, combined with some common household or camping items. Learn to build a fire using a bow and drill, and flint and steel; find water in unusual places; and build a shelter to protect yourself from the elements. (Reservations begin June 30.)

28 Find the Naturalists: Hiking Rock Quarry Trail

Wednesday 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.

(All Ages) Are you up for a challenge? Our naturalists have gone off wandering on our trail and we need your help to find them. We want you to hike with your family on the “Rock Quarry Trail” to try to find them. When you do, you’ll learn interesting things about animals that live around the trail and other amazing nature facts you might not know. (No reservations required.)

Volunteer Milestones

John Schroeder 2000 hours

Busch Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center

July 2010

2360 Hwy D, St. Charles, MO 63304

Hours are: December 1 - March 31 open Monday, Tuesday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

April 1 - November 30 open Monday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., and Tuesday from 2 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Closed all State and Federal Holidays.

For reservations call (636) 441-4554 Monday through Friday 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on our waiting list. Interpretive services are available for those with hearing loss with 5 days notice. From I-40 take Hwy 94 south to Hwy D; turn west on Hwy D for approximately 5 miles. The area entrance is on the south side of Hwy D.

Visit <http://www.mdc.mo.gov/areas/ranges/busch/>

5 Holiday Observed – Range Closed



13, 14, 15 Discover Hunting – Camp

Tuesday - Thursday 4 p.m. - 8 p.m.

(Ages 11 - 15) Does your youngster want to become a more proficient hunter? This camp will challenge kids to learn new skills and techniques in the sport of hunting. The program will take place both outdoors and indoors so dress for the weather, bring snacks, drinks, and don't forget your insect repellent. (Reservations begin June 10.)



Outdoor Adventure Expo

24 *Saturday 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.*

(All Ages) This is an event for all types of outdoor enthusiasts. If you like hunting, fishing, or any other outdoor sport/activity, come and join us for this one day affair. The range staff will provide an opportunity for the public to shoot trap and rifle. All firearms and ammunition will be provided. Leave your guns and ammo at home. We will have hunting/sport retailers, outdoor clubs, and other related organizations to check out. Bring the whole family. It will be held at the August A. Busch Shooting Range. Due to this event the shooting range will not be open for normal public operations.

20, 21, 28 Basic Skeet

Tuesday, Wednesday, Wednesday 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.

(Ages 13 & up) Join us to learn about the exciting sport of skeet shooting. We will cover the rules, tips, and techniques of skeet. This is not a basic shotgun program, so you should already know how to safely handle and shoot a shotgun. The first evening of the program will start in the classroom, the second and third evenings will continue at the Busch Shooting Range for some hands on experience with our instructors. For the actual shooting portion of the event half of the class will shoot on the 21st, the other half on the 28th. This will allow for more quality time on the skeet field. Participants 14 - 17 need to be accompanied by an adult. You may bring your own shotgun or we will have some available. (Reservations begin June 18.)

For a complete listing of all Hunter Education and Bowhunter Education classes throughout the region, visit the web at www.mdc.mo.gov/area/stlouis and click on the "Hunter Education" link on the left of the page.

Jay Henges Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center

July 2010

1100 Antire Road, High Ridge, MO 63049

Range Hours: May 1 - August 31: Wednesday 1 p.m. - 7:30 p.m., Thursday - Sunday 10 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

September 1 - April 30: Wednesday - Sunday 10 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Closed on Mondays and Tuesdays and all State and Federal Holidays.

For reservations call (636) 938-9548 Wednesday through Sunday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on our waiting list. Interpretive services are available for those with hearing loss with 5 days notice. From the east/St. Louis: I-44 west to Beaumont/Antire Road, exit 269. Left over I-44 to Antire Road. Right on Antire road. One hundred feet to entrance. Left into driveway. From the west/Eureka: I-44 east to Beaumont/Antire Road, exit 269. Follow exit lane around to top.

Visit <http://www.mdc.mo.gov/areas/ranges/henges/>

Rifle/Pistol Range closed for renovation. Trap, Shotgun Patterning, and Archery ranges open

4 Holiday – Range Closed

10 Discover Nature – Women: Basic Shotgun

Saturday 1 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

(Ages 16 & up) Join us for an introductory shotgun shooting program. We will cover proper gun selection, proper fit, appropriate ammunition choices, and shooting accessories. We will learn basic shooting stance, gun mount, and movement. After a classroom session, we'll move to the trap field for a time to practice what we've learned. Join us for an introduction to what may become a great lifetime sport. Class limit is 20. (Reservations begin June 10.)



20 – 22 Bowhunter Education

Tuesday 5:30 p.m. - 9 p.m.

Wednesday 5:30 p.m. - 9 p.m.

Thursday 5:30 p.m. - 9 p.m.

(Ages 11 & up) This certification meets the requirement for states that mandate Bowhunter Education in order to purchase a bowhunting permit. This 3 part program

includes bowhunting equipment, hunt preparation, shot placement, trailing and recovery techniques, and tree stand set up and safety. Reservations can be made online at: <http://my.register-ed.com/event/studentchooseevent>, or call 636-938-9548.



27 Introduction to Handguns

Tuesday 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

(Ages 16 & up) Join us for a hands-on look at various types of handguns. We'll provide various examples to handle, and learn about the working mechanisms of revolvers, semi-automatics and some others. We'll discuss caliber and ammunition selection. This course is a good opportunity to "decide before you buy." There is no range time involved in this introductory program. (Reservations begin June 27.)

29 Shotshell Reloading Made Easy

Thursday 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

(Ages 16 & up) Due to the rising cost of shotshell ammunition, here is your opportunity to learn about the inexpensive process of reloading shotgun shells using simple equipment. The technique is easy and will save you money over the cost of factory ammunition. This is a hands-on learning class; we'll produce high quality shotshells with low cost equipment. Class size is limited to 12. (Reservations begin June 29.)



For a complete listing of all Hunter Education and Bowhunter Education classes throughout the region, visit the web at www.mdc.mo.gov and click on the "Hunter Education" link on the left of the page.

Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center

11715 Cragwold Road, Kirkwood, MO 63122

Building hours Tuesday through Saturday: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday and Monday: Closed

Area and trails open seven days a week 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. during Central Standard Time and 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. during Daylight Saving Time.

linger longer

9 Linger Longer

Friday 5 p.m. - 8 p.m.

(All Ages) Once a month Powder Valley's building hours will be extended until 8 p.m. Enjoy the exhibits and gift shop as you "linger longer" at the nature center! Please check your newsletter each month for future dates. No reservations are required.

Once a month, from 5 p.m. - 8 p.m. Upcoming dates are listed below:

- Friday, July 9
- Tuesday, August 10
- Wednesday, September 15
- Friday, October 8

***Spend an evening with us at the nature center!
The building and gift shop will be open!***

MDC
DISCOVER
nature
FAMILIES

14 Discover Nature - Families: It's A Creek Crawl

Wednesday 10 a.m. - Noon

(Ages 6 & up) On a hot summer day, a creek can offer a refreshing place to play and keep cool. Discovering what lives in a creek adds mystery and fun. So, let's do a creek crawl to look for aquatic insects and other invertebrates. We will hike the Hickory Ridge Trail to the creek. Wear shorts and lace-up sneakers for walking through ankle deep water. (Reservations begin June 30.)



14 Lovable Ladybugs

Wednesday 2 - 3:30 p.m.

(Ages 6 -10) Did you know that pretty little ladybugs are good friends to gardeners? Although they are gentle with people, ladybugs are fierce hunters of the tiny aphids that eat the juices of plants. Come help us celebrate these

lovable little predators with activities and crafts. (Reservations begin June 30.)

16 Nature's Niche: Bee-ology

Friday 10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

(Ages 50 & up) Ever wondered about the intricate workings of a honeybee hive? We'll delve into bee-ology basics to learn more about the fascinating lives of these social insects. Take a close look at Powder Valley's observation hive, and even satisfy your sweet tooth with a sampling of some different types of honey. (Reservations begin July 2.)



21 Flashy Fliers

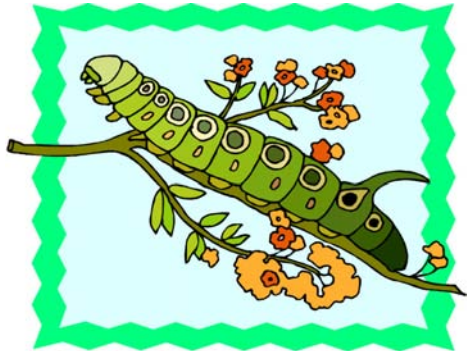
Wednesday 10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

(Ages 7 - 12) Do you know how much fun it is to chase fireflies on a summer evening? It's even more fun when you know about their astonishing lives. Come help us celebrate these "flashy fliers" with activities and crafts. (Reservations begin July 7.)



For reservations call (314) 301-1500

If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on our waiting list. Interpretive services are available for those with hearing loss with 5 days notice. From I-44 east to Kirkwood, take S. Kirkwood Road (Route 61/67). Follow Route 61/67 to Watson Road. Go west on Watson Road to Geyer Road. Go north on Geyer Road 200 yards to Cragwold Road. Go 1 mile west on Cragwold Road. Visit www.mdc.mo.gov/areas/cnc/powder/



27 Mystery Munchers

Tuesday 9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

(Ages 4 - 7) Here is a mystery: what wild muncher is a “vegetarian”? What typically lives longer as a “child” than as an adult? What gets bigger than its “skin”? What looks nothing like its parents until it “grows up”? Want a hint? Its life cycle gets people thinking about complete change and total transformation. Here’s another hint: scientists call it a “larval lepidopteran.” Ready for the answer? Yes, you’re right, it’s a caterpillar! Join us for stories, songs, and crafts celebrating these “mystery munchers.” (Reservations begin July 13.)



31 Leaf Identification

Saturday 8:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

(Ages 16 & up) Learn how to identify many of Missouri’s amazing trees by studying the basic structures of their leaves. Use your new knowledge outdoors to identify several of the trees along Tanglevine Trail. (Reservations begin July 15.)



Powder Valley Hallway Exhibit

Richard Spener Photography



Powder Valley welcomes photographer Richard Spener. He has lived in St. Louis since childhood, but the objects of his photographs, which have been exhibited in newspapers, on calendars, and in slide show presentations, range from his yearly trips to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to forays to Central and South America. His extensive travels, with his wife, Toni Armstrong, and their daughter, Alena, enable him to capture the right moment for a photograph that will be a work of art.

SAVE THIS DATE!

**Friday Night Live:
The BUZZ About BUGS**



**Friday, August 27, 2010
6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.**